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Conducting a Program Evaluation of an OER Initiative

Benefits and Challenges

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Bibliothèque
Library

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The University of Ottawa Library OER Program

Evaluation Report

Mélanie Brunet, PhD, MI, MEd

April 2025

Brunet, M. (2025). *The University of Ottawa Library OER Program: Evaluation Report*. University of Ottawa Library, CC BY-NC 4.0

<http://hdl.handle.net/10393/50336>

About the uOttawa Library's OER Program



May 2020 – April 2025

Target population: faculty members and part-time instructors

Beneficiaries: students

Components:

- Tools (*OER by Discipline Guide*, web pages)
- Services (support and consultations)
- Digital solutions (Pressbooks, H5P)
- Grant

Period evaluated: 2020-2024



Needs at the University of Ottawa

For affordable course materials:

Average cost for required course materials, per course, by language of instruction

	Courses in English	Courses in French
2019-2020	\$148.22	\$96.73
2020-2021	\$150.36	\$90.73
2021-2022	\$138.37	\$103.53
2022-2023	\$155.77	\$113.07
2023-2024	\$145.68	\$121.69

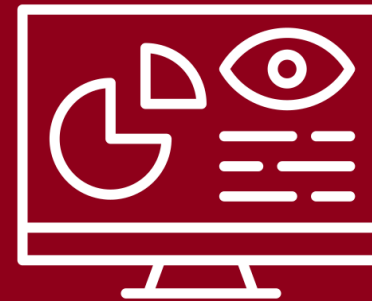
Source: Brunet, M. (2024). uOttawa Textbook Price of Record – Reporting Student Savings [Document]. Note: Amounts are in CAD.

For course materials in French:

- Use of resources in English in courses taught in French
- Use of resources from France or Québec that are culturally or linguistically disconnected
- Difficulty for students to get their hands on French-language materials that exist
- Professors creating their own notes in isolation in the absence of a commercial textbook

**Demonstrate
impact**

**Inform decision
making**



Program evaluation

The systematic process of applying judgment criteria to data in order to determine the merit, value, worth, and significance of a program or intervention

Program or intervention

A coherent, organized, and structured set of objectives, activities, and staff

Dimensions

Relevance

Needs the program attempts to address; alignment between the program and the organization's priorities

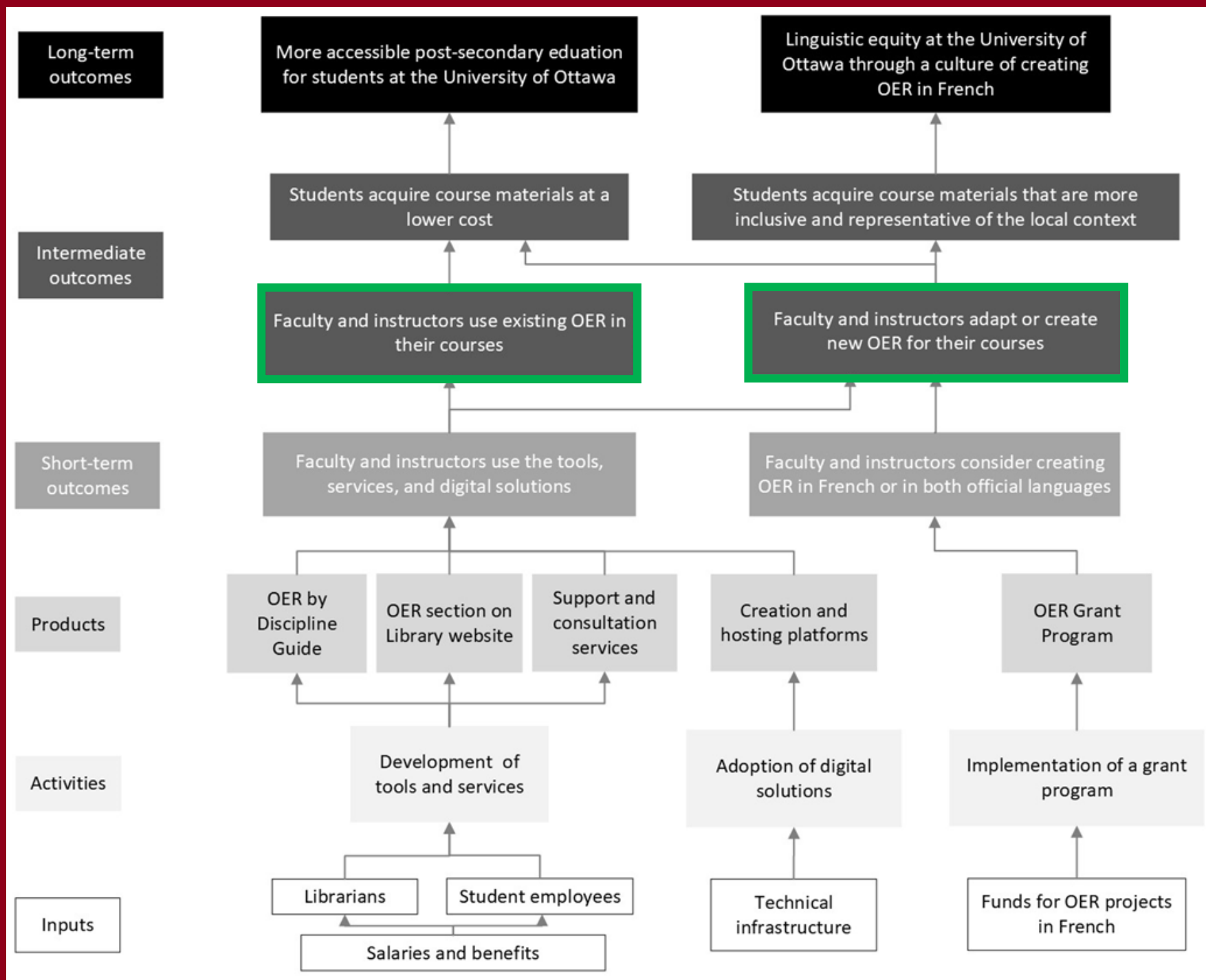
Effectiveness

Achievement of anticipated results; changes observed in the target population

Efficiency

Sound management of the program's human and financial resources; relationship between the results achieved and the resources used to achieve them

OER Program Logic Model



Utilization- Focused Evaluation (UFE)



See: Patton, M.Q. (2012).
*Essentials of utilization-
focused evaluation*.
SAGE.

Objective:


- Provide useful and usable information that is reliable and timely

Flexible Approach:

- Mixed methods
- Scope
- Formative and summative

Source: Chapitre 4. Les cadres théoriques et approches évaluatives dans Bourgeois, I., Buetti, D., & Maltais, S. (2023). *Fondements et pratiques contemporaines en évaluation de programmes*. Université d'Ottawa. CC BY 4.0
<https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/evaluation/chapter/chapitre-4-les-cadres-theoriques-et-approches-evaluatives/>

Evaluation Matrix



Evaluation Questions	Specific research questions to be addressed by the evaluation
Indicators	Concrete elements that will be measured to answer evaluation questions
Success thresholds / Judgement criteria	Standards or targets to be achieved
Data sources	(Examples) Administrative data, secondary data, public documents, computer data, financial data, program participants
Methods	(Examples) Secondary data analysis, literature review, survey, semi-structured interviews

See p. 24-27 of Evaluation Report: <http://hdl.handle.net/10393/50336>

Evaluation Questions



Relevance

2. What are the needs of University of Ottawa students for affordable course materials, and how have these needs changed since the OER Program was first implemented?

Effectiveness

8. Among faculty and instructors who have interacted with the OER Program, to what extent has there been a change in behaviour regarding the use of OER?

Efficiency

9. To what extent does the OER Program have the necessary resources to carry out its planned activities?

Indicators and Thresholds / Criteria

Evaluation Question

8. Among faculty and instructors who have interacted with the OER Program, to what extent has there been a change in behaviour regarding the use of OER?

Indicators

- a) Perceptions of faculty and instructors of OER in university teaching (**Perceptions**)
- b) Number of existing OER used in courses taught by faculty and instructors (**Usage**)
- c) Number of OER adapted or created for courses taught by faculty and instructors (**Usage**)

Success Thresholds / Judgement Criteria

- a) Faculty and instructors report a positive opinion of OER since their interaction with the Program
- b) Faculty and instructors report using an existing OER in at least one course
- c) Faculty and instructors report that they have adapted or created OER themselves, or are in the process of doing so for one of their courses

Open Education Group. (2021). The COUP Framework – Open Education Group. Open Education Group.

<https://web.archive.org/web/20210629193340/https://openedgroup.org/coup>

Open Education Group. (2024). The SCOPE Framework. Open Education Group. <https://openedgroup.org/the-scope-framework/>

Sources and Methods



- Program documentation and data: financial data, project proposals and reports, textbook costs and student spending
- Program participants (127)
- Reports on postsecondary education in Francophone minority contexts
- Documentary analysis
- Secondary data analysis
- Online survey (28)
- Semi-structured interviews (5)

Benefits

**Systematic
approach**

**Language of
leadership**

**Informed
decision-making**

**Integration of
disciplinary theoretical
frameworks**

Challenges

**Evaluating own
program**

Reverse engineering

**Voluntary data
reporting**

— complicates →

Return on investment

Changes in behavior

**Changing
circumstances**

**Keeping it manageable
(scope vs time)**

Some final thoughts



- Obtain an external perspective if possible
- Be strategic in recommendations and take advantage of developments during evaluation
- Make evaluation report publicly available
- Have talking points ready based on main findings

Thank you!



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